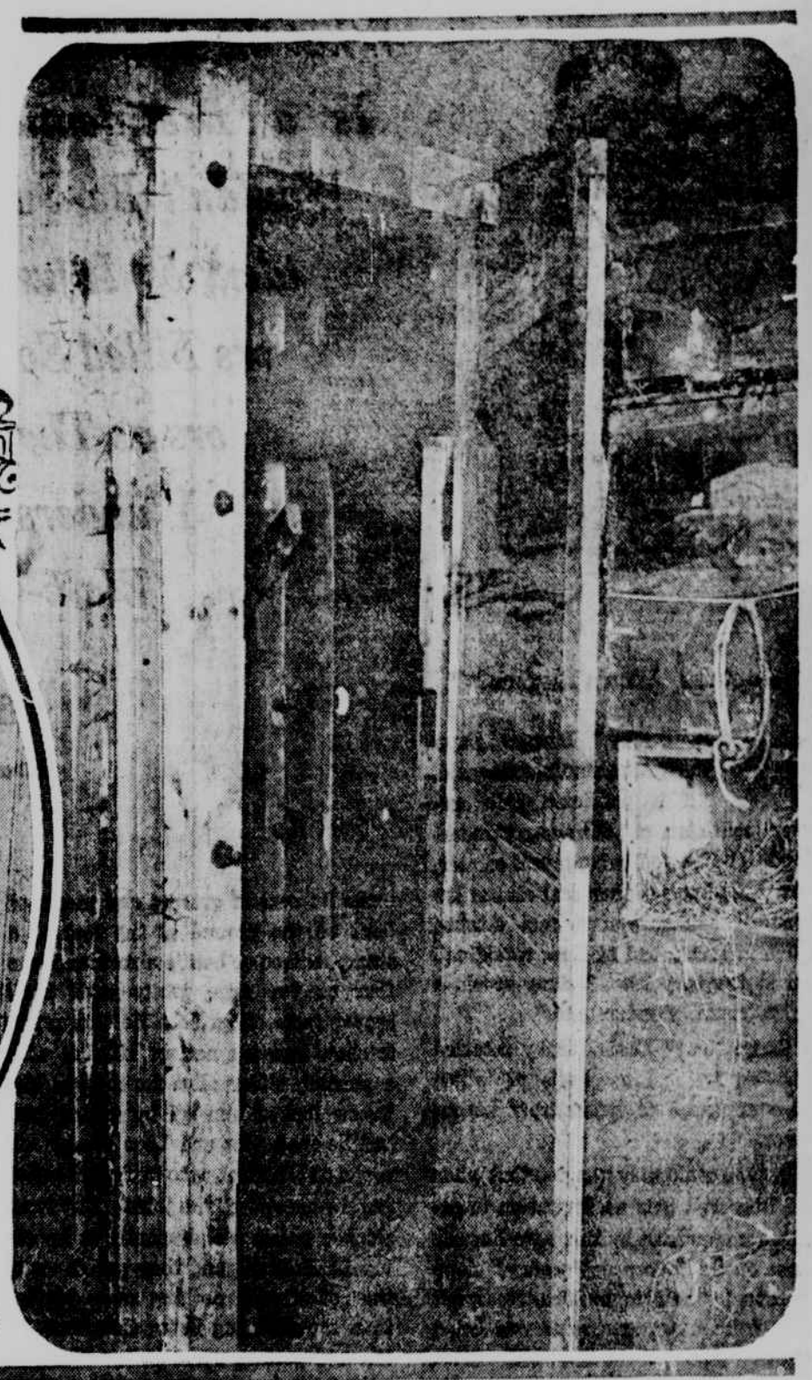
"NICE DAY," SAYS TOM LEE; "HAVE CUP TEA?"

Chinatown Has Stopped Gambling Once and For All. What? Again? Yes, Again!

The fortifications at 20 1-2 Pell Street. After breaking chains at the top of the steps, raiders had to pry open the iron grating, force the bolted door, then batter down the "icebox."

The secret door. A very much frightened Chinaman was lured from his work in a grocery store long enough to pose as a captured gambler. The fingers of a detective—a real one—may be seen gripping his wrist.



The double door here pictured leads to a sunken courtyard, forty feet below the street level. Scores of Chinese gamblers got out by this route before detectives discovered their means of exit.

THE news from Peking that the Chinese government has forbidden poker playing is news in Peking, but not in Chinatown, N. Y. Properly speaking, there is in all of the district threaded by Mott, Pell and Doyers streets no such thing as news, for news, if it is to be news, must be of public interest. Poker is of about as much moment to Chinatown just now as is the latest twist in the Bacon-Shakespeare controversy.

Time was when poker threatened the supremacy of fan-tan. The elusive full house was taken to the Chinese bosom and players sat up far into the night in pursuit of the higher learning which tells a student of Hoyle when to toss away one of his two pairs for the sake of improving his chances in the draw. But that time is past. In this day poker and the Chinese of Pell Street scarcely speak as they pass.

Because poker, with its chance for the individual player as against games in which the dealer holds all the advantage, appeals to the Chinese economo-gambling sense it thrived in Chinatown. The American deck was easier to handle, too—and perhaps to slip into a capacious sleeve—than the narrow cards of the Orient.

But its vogue was of brief duration, for American detectives, who know even more about the game than the crafty Chinese, swooped down upon it, confiscated the cards and chips and arrested the players. Fan-tan came back into its own because, to quote one of the detectives who helped put poker out of business, "You can't tell by lookin' at a bunch of Chinks playin' th' blasted game whether they're gambling or takin' up a collection for the Belgians."

There was just one man in the Police Department who knew enough about the game to be a competent witness in court. He was a detective named Nohl, long since resigned and gone to California. But even his lucid explanation of its mysteries did little to check the gambling, for to get a conviction it was necessary to convince a magistrate that the law was being violated. When he couldn't be made to understand what the game was about, there was little hope for the police.

When detectives battered down half a dozen "icebox" doors, broke their heads in low-tiled passageways and barked their shins on chairs thrown in their path by fleeing "lookouts," they often got to gambling rooms to find from half a dozen to fifty bland Chinamen sitting about tables and fingering buttons and dominoes. There was no money in sight. Sometimes they went over roofs, clambered down fire escapes, dropped into courtyards, skinned a wall and let themselves in through a window. By the time they had pried loose the iron bars covering the glass, kicked out the window frame and tumbled into the room there was one suspected gambler left, and he was asleep, his head pillowed on a gaming table.

"You wake me op," he'd mutter. "You wake me op."

"Where's all that bunch that was playin' fan-tan in here a minute ago?" the detective would demand, regulating his profanity to suit the occasion.

"Whatte say? Fan-tan? No play fan-tan. You wake me op."

Though the electric lights in the room had been extinguished, every bulb was hot enough to burn the hand—unmistakable evidence that the place had been full of gamblers. But there was nothing for the detective to do but retire, which he usually did with more speed than grace.

Various police heads tried their pet schemes for driving out the gamblers. Their strong arm men splintered so many icebox doors that Louis Duck, Chinatown's carpenter, had a bank account larger than the biggest merchant. Sometimes he stayed up all night making doors for the next night's gambling supply—making doors and horses and table tops and chairs to replace those the police had smashed. Police Headquarters took on the appearance of a kindling yard, and still the Chinese gambled.

A good many years ago, long before the door-smashing crusades started, there was a plainclothes patrolman in Chinatown named Burke—"Chew-Tobacco" Burke, they called him. He's a captain now. In his first days in Chinatown, anxious to make his mark, he did an unheard of thing. He told a Tammany henchman named Callahan that he'd have to close his saloon on Sunday. Callahan laughed him to scorn; told him he'd have him "broke." Nevertheless the saloon was eventually closed, and so it remained while Burke was on the beat. That, if you care to go that far back, may have been the forerunner of the Chinatown "clean-up," as it developed in subsequent years.

Various police inspectors went into Chinatown with a record to make. Few, with the exception of the last two named—"Honest John" Daly and John T. Dwyer, the present head of the Second Inspection District—added anything to their story. Daly's men did well, but Dwyer's men did better. Daly's men battered down doors; Dwyer's made the Chinese keep their doors open.

To-day there is no gambling in Chinatown. That is a statement worth emphasizing. It sounds exaggerated, but is susceptible of proof. I proved it by the best evidence in the world—ocular evidence gathered in going over the ground.

Consequent of this, Chinatown is threatened with extinction. In another year, those who know say, there will be hundreds in the district where once there were thousands. The Chinese Theatre is gone. Stores are closed, missions are working at half time and with reduced forces for gathering converts. It was a sorry day five years ago when a missionary couldn't step outside the door and save the souls of at least half a dozen white girls. To-day the white women who are in Chinatown are married to Chinese.

Chinatown is near effacement because of the closing down of gambling. The Chinese is the world's natural gambler. He will wager on the number of seeds in an orange, on the number of grains in an ear of corn—on anything, in fact, that affords the chance. Unless he can gamble he does not stay in his home. Absolutely without home ties, and willing even to sacrifice his business, of whatever it may consist, for a chance to be where he may bet something on something, he packs up and gets out when gambling is denied him.

New York's Chinatown is fast losing its citizens. They are going to Newark and Jersey City to play fan-tan and poker. The grocery stores, tea houses and restaurants, except such as are retained for the benefit of the sightseer, are closing because they are losing patronage. It used to be that thousands of laundrymen from various parts of the city, and even from neighboring cities, visited Chinatown on Saturday and Sunday nights to gamble, do a little shopping and perhaps smoke a pipe of opium. Now they go across the river to gamble. And where they gamble they spend their money for groceries and clothing.

With the permission of Inpector Dwyer I went through, down into and over the top of Chinatown with two of his men, William Jones, better known as "Broadway" Jones, and Benjamin Bailie, "The Kid." The Chinese call Jones "Blodway," but they call Bailie "cossin" (cousin), a mark of signal respect. He kicks down doors in Chinatown where other men use axes, and the Chinese rather appreciate the lesser degree of damage to their property.

Bailie helped himself to a candle from the sleeping room of a tea store keeper who seemed to have more than enough, and Jones slipped a fresh battery into his pocket flash lamp before we started. Where things used to blaze with myriad electric lights dust and darkness are now.

On the plate glass window in the store at 20½ Pell Street is blazoned in gold letters the name of the Kwong Ching Chong Company. From the street it appears to be what once was a curio shop, long since closed for lack of sightseers with money to spend. Beyond the shallow depth of the shop, almost a false front for the building, it is different.

A single door, made in the familiar "icebox" style, gives ingress from the store. Double barred and bolted, it opens into what once was one of the biggest gaming houses in the neighborhood, where the Chinese played by hundreds every night. Simple enough to get in with an axe and a modicum of strength and patience.

The "icebox" door gets its name from the fact that it is made of layers of new wood, two, three and some times even four thicknesses, nailed together with the grains crossing. It is impossible to split one with a single blow. When the outer layer is taken off with an axe there is another and another, and perhaps another to be stripped. By the time a single door is demolished every gambler in the block can get away; by the time half a dozen of them are ripped open even the electric light globes are cold.

It is simple enough, as noted, to get into the main room back of the pseudo shop at 20½ Pell Street. But when the Chinese found they couldn't play there with safety they descended into the cellar, building icebox doors and bolting heavy trapdoors behind them. Driven out of the cellar, they took to the sub-cellar, erecting doors, doors, doors as they went. Now one goes from the street floor to the lowermost level by kicking open eleven doors and lifting two traps.

There are no fewer than five "getaways" to 20½ Pell Street. One of them leads to a sunken courtyard forty feet below the surface of the street. Cobwebs are festooned across this exit, but not many months ago it was in prime demand.

So difficult was it to get near a Chinese gambling game that it was weeks before Jones, Bailie, McCormick and Sergeant Keller, of Dwyer's strong arm staff, realized what task they were facing. Dwyer had been sent down from the Tenderloin to clean out Chinatown, and his men knew it. How it was to be accomplished was the question.

There was a gambling house at the corner of Pell and Doyers Streets. The moment the detectives entered the boundaries of Chinatown word of their presence was passed from the lookout at Mott Street and the Bowery to one at the Mott Street Arcade, from there to another at the corner of Pell Street and thence to the gambling houes. The hated "umpai" smashed dozens of doors in vain. There was nobody to arrest.

Just once in all his time in Chinatown has one of the men seen a game of fan-tan. This bit of luck fell to Jones—or perhaps it would be nearer the truth to say that he fell into it. Evading the lookouts by keeping in the rear of buildings, Jones climbed a fire escape to a room where he knew there was a game. There was ice on the iron steps, and he slipped just as he came abreast of the window. He fell, crashed through the sash and landed plump on a table in the midst of the gamblers' money and thir buttons. Unaided, he arrested seven men. He doesn't recall the disposition of the case, but doubts whether he got a conviction. As he remembers it, the Chinamen were taking up a collection for the latest neutral victims of the U-boats.

The arrangement at 20½ Pell is typical of other old gaming places, though there is none other with double cellars. Across the street, in No. 19, the gamblers had a basket change-making system modelled on the department store style. At 15½ the "getaway" was ten feet above the ground in a rear entryway. When it came time to use it an iron ladder was dropped and everybody escaped but one Chinese. He stayed behind to lift up the ladder and pretend to be asleep, so there would be some one to say to the raiders, "You wake me op."

The doors of the Mercis Club, at 10-12 Doyers Street, are padlocked. There has been no one there for weeks. The same conditions prevail at 15 Doyers Street, at 17½ and at 24. The courtyards of these places are deeply strewn with fan-tan buttons, discarded playing cards, tops of tables, and even empty "toys" that once contained opium. Destruction is everywhere. Many doors have been replaced, but others still show the marks of the raiders' axes.

At 11 Mott Street, Charley Boss's old place, there is dust an inch thick. At No. 24, once the headquarters of the Ong Leong Tong, everything is ruin. Along the length of the street only the joss house, which is kept open for the dimes it gets from the passengers on the sightseeing 'buses, remains of the old order. "The Mission," as the gambling house at No. 41 was known, has given way to a drug store, and tenement houses once filled with Chinese are given over to Italian families.

Charley Boss, Mock Duck, Sam Luk, Tom Kip and even Tom Lee, the "Mayor" of Chinatown, are shorn of their influence. Old Tom Lee sits in a corner of his office and wags his long gray beard sadly when a visitor essays to talk of the days that are gone.

"Nice day," he observes. "Have a cigar? No smoke cigar? All lite. Have cup o' tea."

And that's about all there is left to Chinatown—cigars and cups of tea. When Dwyer's men gave up battering down doors and made the gamblers leave their doors wide open, every one of them, the retrogression started. No Chinaman who cares anything for his self-respect is going to gamble—even if he plays fan-tan—where anybody can see him.

HOW TO MAKE MONEY - - - By Robert J. Wildhack

IV—DIGGING FOR GOLD.

Stake out a little "gold" mine, that is fairly rich in slate,
And announce it in a paper that you know will circulate.
For the safest way to put across your phoney speculation
Is to tie it to a journal of "established reputation."

1—The Confederate.
2—Money.

THE SCIENCE OF WORK.

WITH the present agitation for an ever-increasingly short working days comes the statistician who proves that, by rights, the American working man should not work at all. Follow closely:

There are, by common consent, 365 days in the year. Doctors agree that a man should devote one-third of his time to sleep and one-third to recreation. Counting one-third of a year as approximately 122 days, we have 121 days left, after taking out this allowance.

Subtract from this the fifty-two Sundays which are the workingman's right, and we have sixty-nine days left. Saturday half holidays consume twenty-six of these, leaving forty-three.

One hour off for lunch on five days in the week make 260 hours, or approximately twenty-two days, which leaves our total working time twenty-one days. But a man is entitled to a two weeks' vacation in the summer and the six legal holidays afforded by the state, making a total vacation time of twenty days. Taking this from our working time of twenty-one days we have a remainder of one working day.

This, however, is Yom Kippur.